

Claims

1. A refuse compactor for a restaurant facility comprising:

5 (a) a frame comprising a horizontal rectangular base and a pair of upwardly extending structural members affixed to the base along opposed side edges thereof;

(b) a horizontal cross member extending between the pair of structural members at upper ends thereof;

10 (c) a compaction plate assembly including a one-piece platen pivotally affixed to a support member for rotation about a horizontal axis, a compaction plate driver operatively disposed between said horizontal cross member and said support member for driving the compaction plate in a vertical direction toward and away from said base; and

15 (d) means for pivoting the platen from a first position inclined to the vertical to a second horizontal position during a downward movement of the compaction plate assembly and returning the platen to the inclined position during an upward movement of the compaction plate assembly.

2. The refuse compactor as in claim 1 and further including:

20 (a) means for biasing the platen toward the second horizontal position.

3. The refuse compactor as in claim 2 and further including means for releasably locking the platen in the horizontal position during the downward movement of the compaction plate assembly.

4. The refuse compactor of claim 1 and further including an enclosure mounted on said base, the enclosure including a pair of sidewalls joined to one another by a rear wall and a door member hinged to the frame about a vertical axis and adapted to form a front wall of the enclosure when the door member is parallel to the rear wall, said door member including a refuse receiving opening formed through it.

5. The refuse compactor of claim 4 and further including a hinged panel pivotable about a horizontal axis for selectively blocking the refuse-receiving opening.

6. The refuse compactor as in claim 5 and further including means for automatically pivoting the hinged panel to unblock the refuse-receiving opening.

7. The refuse compactor as in claim 5 and further including an electric motor operatively coupled to the hinged panel for pivoting the hinged panel to unblock the refuse receiving opening upon activation of the motor; and a motion sensor mounted on the door for initiating activation of the motor upon approach of a patron of the restaurant facility within a predetermined distance of the refuse compactor.

8. The refuse compactor as in claim 5 wherein said means for automatically pivoting the hinged panel places the hinged panel generally parallel to the platen when the platen is in the first position.

9. The refuse compactor as in claim 6 and further including means for preventing movement of the hinged panel from an opening blocking position during movement of the compaction plate assembly.

10. The refuse compactor as in claim 4 and further including an electrical switch for preventing operation of the compaction plate driver when the door member is ajar.

5 11. The refuse compactor as in claim 1 and further including means for playing an audio message upon actuation of the electric motor.

10 12. The refuse compactor as in claim 1 and further including a wheeled cart, adapted to sit on the rectangular base, the cart supporting a removable container into which refuse can be deposited and compacted.

15 13. The refuse compactor as in claim 10 wherein the compaction plate driver includes a hydraulic ram, an electric motor and a hydraulic pump driven by the electric motor with the hydraulic pump being connected to the hydraulic ram and the electrical switch being connected in circuit with the electric motor.

20 14. The refuse compactor as in claim 10 wherein the compaction plate driver includes a pair of guide rails pivotally joined to the compaction plate, the guide rails having a gear rack on an exterior surface thereof, an electric motor-driven gear box having an output shaft and pinion gears affixed to the output shaft and engaging the gear rack on the pair of guide rails; and the electrical switch being connected in circuit with the electric motor.